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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /088 W
----------121228Z 035373 /23-12
R 121023Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1031
INFO AMCONGEN HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7904

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, CB, TH
SUBJ: LATEST CAMBODIAN BORDER INCIDENT

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED APR 12 A KC RAID ON A BORDER VILLAGE OF BAN LAEM IN PONG NAM RON DISTRICT OF CHANTHABURI PROVINCE TWO DAYS EARLIER. APPARENTLY OUTNUMBERED, SMALL BPP UNIT STATIONED AT THIS VISLLAGE SOME 200 METERS INSIDE THAI FRONTIER WITHDREW. THREE PERSONS WERE REPORTEDLY WOUNDED IN THE ATTACK AND TWENTY HOUSES AND RICE STORAGE AREAS BURNED. VILLAGERS HAVE EVACUATED HOMES AT PRESENT, AND RTG IS SAID TO HAVE SENT IN REINFORCEMENTS FOR THE BPP UNIT.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT PACHARIYANGKUN REPORTED AT PRESS CONFERENCE APR 12 THAT DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER KHANUNG LUCHAI HAD INFORMED CABINET OF THE CAMBODIAN "INVASION" AT CABINET MEETING EARLIER THAT DAY. UPPADIT SAID THAT RTG WILL PROTEST TO CAMBODIA THROUGH LIAISON OFFICE SYSTEM
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AFTER RECEIVING FURTHER DETAILS FROM INTERIOR MINISTRY.

3. IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR WHY KC ATTACKED VILLAGE OR WOULD WANT TO REMOVE THE POPULATION FROM THE AREA. SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, BOUNDARY LINE IS NOT IN DISPUTE AT THAT POINT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ATTACK WAS IN RETALIATION FOR SOME CAMBODIAN REISTANCE ACTIVITY BASED IN CHANTHABURI

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PROVINCE OR, JUST AS LIKELY, THAT IT OCCURRED AS RESULT
OF SOME KIND OF LOCAL DISPUTE.

4. AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT ONE ASEAN COUNTRY (PROB-
ABLY MALAYSIA) HAD INFORMED RTG THAT CAMBODIAN DEPUTY
PRIMIN IENG SARY HAD INDICATED DURING RECENT VISIT TO
THAT COUNTRY CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WILLINGNESS TO PATCH THINGS
UP WITH THAILAND. SOURCE OPINED THAT BAN LAEM ATTACK WOULD
APPEAR TO REPRESENT A REGRESSION IN THAT ATTITUDE, MAKING
ONE WONDER HOW SOLID IS IENG SARY'S REPORTED WILLINGNESS
TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

5. SEVERAL OTHER BORDER INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED THUS FAR
THIS MONTH. ISOC REPORTED THAT KC ATTACKED A THAI SPECIAL
OPERATIONS TEAM IN TA PHRAYA DISTRICT ON APR 1, KILLING
TWO THAI AND INJURING ONE. PRESS NOTED THAT CAMBODIAN
GUNBOAT FIRED ON THAI TRAWLER OFF SOUTHERN TRAT PROVINCE
APR 3 UNTIL THAI NAVAL CRAFT INTERVENED. ON SAME DAY IN
SAME PROVINCE, TWO VILLAGERS WERE KILLED ALONG BORDER
AFTER STEPPING ON KC BOOBY TRAPS. DURING PAST WEEKEND
PRESS HAS WRITTEN OF THAI OPERATION TO REMOVE KC FROM
THAI SIDE OF MOUNTAIN RAGNE FORMING BORDER BETWEEN THE
TWO COUNTRIES IN TRAT. ALTHOUGH BORDER INCIDENTS HAVE NOT
BEEN AS DRAMATIC OF LATE AS THEY WERE EARLIER THIS YEAR,
THEY CONTINUE TO BE FAIRLY NUMEROUS. THUS, THE BAN LAEM
RAID WAS NOT AN ISOLATED INCIDENT, IMPRESSION WHICH PRESS
ATTENTION COULD CONVEY.
WHITEHOUSE

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